CHAPTER X:
THE NATURALISTS

The National Park Service has striven through specially trained naturalists to interpret outstanding aspects of the nation's landscape and wildlife for the pleasure and edification of the millions who have visited the national parks. To tell his park's story, a park naturalist, aided by his staff and seasonal ranger-naturalists, has carried out a varied program of talks, nature walks, and field trips. As a result, travelers have been shown flora and fauna thriving in a protected habitat. Moreover, the naturalist program has been aimed at transcending what the eye can perceive, so that hopefully, visitors have been led to an understanding of the forces underlying life. The late Merlin K. Potts, former Chief Park Naturalist at Rocky Mountain National Park, maintained that the interpretive program was "the most important phase of service to the Park visitor by the Park Service." [1]

The roots of the sophisticated, professional naturalist service lay deep in the history of Rocky Mountain National Park. In fact, it can be said that a naturalist program existed before the Park's boundaries were drawn. Enos Mills, a disciple of John Muir, used to entertain guests at his rustic Longs Peak Inn with stories and explanations about the animals and flowers of the area. He often took his friends on hikes into the back country and up mountain trails. Whether sitting on rocks at timberline or in the comfort of the Inn, his guests listened enthusiastically to his tales—tales liberally sprinkled with the spice of his imagination. Most important, he made nature study interesting and meaningful to many who might have otherwise remained totally ignorant of nature's mysteries.

In the years immediately following the creation of the Park, there was no officially sponsored naturalist service for visitors. It was not until 1917 that a "new attraction" was introduced in the form of "Nature Guide" tours. These tours were conducted by young ladies versed in "flowers, birds, animals and trees." The guides were apparently reasonably well qualified, since they were required to pass an examination to prove their qualifications as "nature teachers and in first aid work and knowledge of the country." Being of the so-called weaker sex, their excursions were limited to day trips below timberline, unless accompanied by a "first-class" male guide. Superintendent Way reported that the girls were successful and popular and they filled "a long felt want." [2] There is no record, however, that they ever worked a second year as naturalists in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Nevertheless an attempt was made to continue an interpretive program. The Park administration prepared, printed and distributed to visitors in 1918 a list of the Park's birds and plants to help satisfy "the great interest taken in nature study by adults and children." [3]

The "demand for authentic information on natural science" was so great the following year that the list was enlarged. Much of the data was gathered by Park Ranger Dean Babcock.

In part, the demand grew as the number of travelers increased and the Park officials provided camping facilities. The first campground in Rocky Mountain National Park was established in 1918, at Glacier Basin on the Bear Lake Road. Enough ground was cleared for 100 camps, for which some cement campfire stoves were installed, along with garbage pits and sanitary comfort stations. As many as 83 camp groups were counted there in one day during the first summer season. The next year the use of this free public campground increased by 100 percent. "The need is great for additional improved camping grounds," Way reported,

> and I trust that sufficient funds will be available next year to install them. Cross-country travel by auto is increasing by leaps and bounds, and we should be prepared to supply the needs of the people. [4]

The Park's travel statistics reflected the growing popularity of cross-country motoring. Visitors to the Park increased by 48 percent in 1920, with 132,052 people passing the checking stations. What little naturalist service there was by this time came from private guides working for nearby resorts. The Park Service provided nothing but the view. [5] Nevertheless, by 1921 the Park administration began the operation of an Information Bureau in the Park's administrative office. Clifford Higby, for years a local guide, was selected to run the bureau. Though the Park itself did not provide a guide service, it did examine and license local people to act as guides in the Park. [6]

The cause of interpreting nature in parks received a boost at the National Park Service Conference of 1922. Few subjects that came up for consideration there interested the superintendents more than the educational opportunities inherent in the national parks. They advocated the establishment of an educational division of the Service-at-Large, along the lines of the landscape and civil engineering division. Then, too, it was common knowledge that National Parks Director Stephen Tyng Mather had long been interested in "Nature Guide Work." [7]

Yet, there were handicaps to be overcome. The administrative problem seemed not as vexing as the psychological one. The words "nature study" and "naturalist" unfortunately suggested eccentric hobbies and persons in the minds of many tourists. An early naturalist recalled:

> A man might be interested in rocks or animals, or trees, but he didn't want to be thought of as a naturalist. Many times I have seen men who were eager to learn of the out-of-doors hang about the outside of the group desirous of joining it yet reluctant to do so for fear he might be considered less of a 'he-man' [8]

Nevertheless, during the 1923 travel season, Rocky Mountain National Park officials updated their service by hiring J. M. Johnson of Ridgewood, New Jersey, as a "naturalist."

He had been an assistant principal in the New York City school system and a lecturer on natural history subjects for the Board of Education of New York City and the National Association of Audubon Societies. He had spent five summers traveling and camping in the mountains of Colorado and Wyoming. Johnson was not the first "naturalist" hired by a national park, however, for in 1920, Yellowstone National Park had offered conducted field trips led by a naturalist.

During his first summer in the Park, Johnson delivered 31 lectures and conducted 27 field trips. His lectures, illustrated with lantern slides, were given free of charge at the leading hotels and were attended by an average of one hundred people. The field trips taken on the morning following the lectures usually included twenty to thirty people. [9] In his work, Johnson was guided by the expressed aims of his nature guide program—"to encourage conservation of the columbine . . . to assist in forest fire protection work, and to help visitors to better understand and enjoy what they see." [10] His program was successfully supplemented by the efforts of Charles Bowman Hutchins, another leading naturalist. Hutchins' specialty was imitating the songs of most of the birds on the North American continent, an accomplishment which he demonstrated at lectures or in nature walks. [11]

The growing interest in naturalist activities was spurred by a change in Park superintendents. When Roger W. Toll, a natural scientist, took office in 1921, he played an active role in promoting many aspects of the Park's program. Typically, Toll often publicized the Park by giving stereopticon slide talks in the valley towns. In 1924, he provided for expanding the nature guide service by employing Perley A. Smoll of Colorado Springs, as "Park Naturalist." Smoll gave stereopticon lectures on trees, flowers, wildlife, and the natural resources of the Park, which did much, according to Toll, "to interest the visitors in the natural beauties of the park and in the need of protecting them." [12] Smoll also drafted "nature notes and studies" for publication each week in the local newspaper, and prepared a permanent exhibit of the conifers of the Park and a separate flower exhibit, for display in the administrative office.

An increasing number of Smoll's clientele stayed at the Park's expanding campground facilities. Three tracts were purchased for use as public campgrounds in 1924, and the first, Aspenglen, on 41 acres located four-and-a-half miles from Estes Park on the Fall River Road, was opened that summer. The second, Endovalley, not prepared till later, was a nineteen acre tract located eight and a half miles from Estes Park at the upper end of Horseshoe Park. The third site, later called Pineledge, was located two and a half miles from Estes Park, south of the Highdrive Road. Park attendants were stationed at both Glacier Basin and Aspenglen campgrounds to supervise sanitary conditions, see that fires were extinguished, and enforce other Park rules. [13]

Perley Smoll further expanded the variety and scope of the Park's interpretive program in 1925 by adding several leisurely all-day hikes to the previous schedule. He also served in activities not under Park jurisdiction. In or adjacent to the Park, there were 21 permanently established centers requiring the nature guide service. Two were summer schools conducted by colleges in the state; two were boys' summer camps, and one a girls' summer camp, while the others were sponsored by the Y.M.C.A. Conference Association, Estes Park Village, and

hotels both in and outside the Park. In all during 1925, Smoll gave 24 lectures to 2,652 people and led 477 nature lovers on fourteen field trips. Furthermore, Smoll and Superintendent Toll both spoke over a Denver radio station, under the auspices of the Colorado Mountain Club. At the season's end, Toll analyzed the effectiveness of his program:

> Our educational and natural history work is growing in usefulness and popularity each year. . . . [14] Until we secure a museum building, however, where activities and interests may be centered, anything like a full development of the wealth of nature study opportunities in this park will be impossible. [15]

The 1926 season did not bring a museum, but the Information Bureau headquarters in the administrative building served to distribute thousands of Park booklets, maps, and folders and provide information to visitors on a large variety of subjects. Over 1,500 visitors registered at the Information Bureau. To Superintendent Toll, the Park was becoming host to a more perceptive group of visitors. He noted:

> Park visitors have shown an increased appreciation of the educational opportunities offered by the National Park Service, and in many cases have shown a desire for more accurate and complete knowledge with reference to natural history subjects. [16]

Park officials were not alone in noticing this heightened sophistication. A naturalist writing later described the change, from the "old days," when the traveling public was

> an exceptionally gullible group of people. They were not especially interested in the 'whys' and 'where-fores' of the phenomena which they observed. The jokes and gags of the hotel porters interested them far more than the cause of geyser eruptions or the formation of the country about them . . . .
>
> But the viewpoint suddenly changed. The tourists were no longer content to remain in the 'rubberneck' class. They became interested in what the parks contained. In their geology, flora and fauna they found a never ending source of pleasure. With this changing viewpoint it was necessary to institute a service which would deal with the explanatory and interpretive details.
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> Thus the ranger-naturalist came into being. [17]

Rocky Mountain National Park's first designated "ranger-naturalits" was Dr. Margaret Fuller Boos, who led the interpretive program during the summers of 1928-1929, and both lectured at various hotels in the vicinity and conducted nature study trips. She also edited a series of Nature News Notes during her two-year service in the Park. During her last summer there, about 8,000 people took advantage of the varied educational facilities offered by the Park, double the figure of the previous year. To accommodate the increasing number of visitors, a

fifth campground, Longs Peak, at the base of the Longs Peak trail was added to the Park in 1929. [18]

The 1930's opened without the services of a naturalist, but soon this deficiency was remedied by the establishment of the first permanent post of an Associate Park Naturalist. Meanwhile, the clerk in the Information Bureau answered questions on flowers and natural phenomena, collected and classified specimens of wild flowers and collaborated on a booklet, Birds and Plants of Rocky Mountain National Park. Rangers conducted nature trips and the Park staff published three issues of Nature Notes. A reference library was started when Mrs. Enos Mills donated a set of her late husband's publications. [19]

When in 1931 Dorr G. Yeager of Yellowstone National Park was appointed Associate Park Naturalist, he brought new vigor to the educational program. He organized lectures, field trips, auto caravans, and self-guilding nature walks and utilized a new Park museum. In 1930, Park Superintendent Edmund Rogers had successfully requested funds to build a museum just south of the Park office in Estes Park. [20] The Estes Park Trail had considered the need for the museum "the most pressing one in the community today." [21] By the time the museum was constructed in June of 1931, the month that Yeager arrived, the Park's nature program could move from the level of spontaneity to professionalism.

The Park's museum played a prominent role in the overall interpretive program. Yeager and Superintendent Rogers shared the opinion that the museum was the cornerstone of that program. "It is generally the first contact the visitor has with the Educational Department," Rogers reported,

> and its effect should be to stimulate him to see more of it. For that reason expansion along museum lines is going forward as rapidly as money will permit. [22]

The museum at headquarters was embellished with exhibits dealing with habitat groups, Indians, and geology. A small branch museum was located in the ranger station at Bear Lake. With the close of the 1932 season, work began on another museum, converted from a stone shelter cabin on Fall River Pass. The Estes Park Trail considered the headquarters museum to be "marvelous." [23]

Visitor interest ran so high as to overwhelm the nearly indefatigable "Education Department." Despite the addition of a seasonal ranger-naturalist position in 1932, Rogers complained: "There is an increasing demand for the work and, due to an insufficient personnel, there have been many requests which could not be filled," [24] Furthermore, the average Park visitor was a hardy soul. All-day hikes proved to be so popular that the Protection Department was called in to help handle the groups.

There was also an increasing tendency toward camping out. Because of the many cottages, camps, lodges, and hotels in or adjacent to the Park, camping had never been as popular as in other Parks. But because of the depression, more people found camping out to their pleasure. Glacier Basin and Aspenglen were the most popular campsites, with over 15,000

campers recorded during the summer season. The Pineledge campground was turned into a residential area in 1932. [25]

Museum attendance boomed as the total for the two main museums climbed to 21,000, This increased interest was displayed not only by visitors but also by local residents. Illustrated lectures were given at the headquarters museum three times a week—often to overflow crowds.

The Park's popular museum program was supplemented in 1935 by the opening of the Moraine Park Museum. The National Park Service had purchased the buildings associated with Moraine Lodge, and had torn down all of them except a large log structure formerly used as a recreation hall. Federal relief funds made possible its conversion into a museum. Sturdily constructed of logs, it blended harmoniously into the forested moraines of the Park. It stood but a few yards from the Trail Ridge Road and faced south, with the front range in the background. In keeping with the philosophy that "Each museum is . . . a chapter in the information book of the park," the Moraine Park Museum avoided duplicating exhibits at the other museums. Rather, its exhibits dealt with the Indians and pioneer history of the region. [26]

Except for short assignments of naturalists from other parks, the position of Chief Park Naturalist lay vacant until the end of the 1936 season. Then on August 29, H. Raymond Gregg transferred from Hot Springs National Park to become the new Chief Park Naturalist. Most impressive among Gregg's ensuing accomplishments was the beginning in 1938 of a Junior Nature School program of field trips for children. In the beginning, all children were gathered into one group, with ages ranging from seven to 16 years. A series of attainment standards was established and activities were scheduled, enabling children to qualify for certificates through a combination of hikes, museum meetings, and play sessions. [27]

A press release concerning this "school" came to the attention of Program Director Clarence Moore of the Denver radio station KOA. He made arrangements through the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company for a nationwide, fifteen minute presentation from the school each Thursday afternoon throughout the travel season, Broadcast under the title of "Nature Sketches," the programs attracted wide attention. Favorable comments were received from almost every state. These popular programs continued through the 1942 season, when they were dropped because of war-time demands on radio broadcasting. [28]

Meanwhile, junior activities were expanded. In 1939 and 1940, older children were grouped as boy "Nature Scouts" and "Girl Naturalists," and emphasis upon hiking and nature study, introducing larger elements of self-development and independent pursuit of interest, developed through the activity. These programs were discontinued when the demands upon staff time grew out of proportion to the relative importance of this single phase of the entire Park interpretation program, and the junior activities for 1941 and 1942 were confined to a schedule of field trips with no age segregation. [29]

The expanded naturalist program of the years immediately preceding World War II was made possible by an enlarged naturalist staff. From 1939 to 1941 five ranger-naturalists

were employed during the travel season. Their services were complemented by the construction of new amphitheaters in the Park, at Moraine Park in 1937, Glacier Basin in 1939, and Aspenglen in 1940. Lectures and conducted trips were initiated at the new Timber Creek campground on the west side in 1941. In 1942, Headquarters Museum was converted for administrative use, and the exhibits were moved to Moraine Park Museum, which became a natural history hall. Visitor contacts rose from 121,103 in 1939 to 161,182 in fiscal 1940. The popularity of naturalist activities came as a mixed blessing to the Park's burdened staff. Superintendent David Canfield reported on the seriousness of the situation:

> The increased interest in naturalist activities in general . . . has necessitated expanded schedules of services enforcing additional duties upon the already overtaxed naturalist staff of six. In many cases, the ranger-naturalists were forced to work as much as 11 to 14 hours per day to answer the demand for their services, The need for additional interpretation personnel is already beyond the state of acuteness. [30]

Contributing to Canfield's despair may have been some new responsibilities at national monuments recently handed to the Park's administrative and interpretive departments. [31]

As a result of wartime travel curtailment in 1942, the ranger-naturalist staff was reduced from five to three, and services were cut correspondingly. Yet it is interesting to note that in 1942, while total Park attendance was down forty-five percent from 1941, attendance at naturalist activities was up sixty percent from the previous year. It was apparent that fewer visitors were making hurried trips through the Park, but those who came, stayed longer than former visitors. No ranger-naturalists were employed during the war years after 1942. Former ranger-naturalists employed as temporary rangers assisted in providing lectures, however, until Raymond Gregg, who had left for military service in 1942, returned to duty on December 17, 1945. [32]

The post-war years at Rocky Mountain National Park were characterized by booming attendance. The lifting of wartime rationing on gasoline and the flood of returning servicemen contributed to a record number of visitors in the summer of 1946. During July, a total of 70,893 persons were given interpretive services as compared to 65,379 for July 1941, the previous one-month record. [33] And in August, 102,809 visitors came to the Park, well above the previous record set in August 1941, of 57,008. [34]

During 1947, not only did more people visit the Park than ever before, but also a higher percentage of them attended naturalist activities. The beleaguered Education Department substituted more frequent short field trips for the previous lengthy ones. Superintendent Canfield received the following assessment from the acting head of his naturalist service:

> The demand for . . . service was far greater than the limited staff could provide . . . . The war-weary public apparently has a greater appreciation of, and desire to learn more about, the natural sciences and the great out-of-doors than previously. [35]

Before the next season began, Edwin C. Alberts replaced Raymond Gregg as Chief Naturalist. For the 1948 travel season he was aided by two ranger-naturalists, an information clerk and a "Seasonal Park Naturalist." Canfield predicted that this complement would be "Completely inadequate for the record breaking crowds." [36] By the end of July Canfield reported:

> Due to the limited staff, number of requests for interpretive programs, special hikes, etc., had to be declined. Considerable overtime and much doubling up were necessary on the part of all members of the staff in order that the program could be continued. [37]

The Park's campgrounds received unusually heavy use. A 75 percent increase was reported in the number of camper-days of use during the 1948 season. A total of 56,046 camper-days was recorded, as compared to 31,995 during the 1947 season. Lamented Superintendent Canfield:

> The heavy use of the park in general and the campgrounds in particular is resulting in a serious impairment of natural features and accommodations. [38]

In the years 1949-1953 the naturalist staff tried new ways to satisfy the burgeoning number of Park visitors. Several experimental developments were put into operation, such as: recorded music before the evening talks at the Moraine Park Museum; a recorded "Glacier Talk" given four times daily; and "continuation hikes." These hikes involved a combination of the regular interpretive trip with a continuation into more remote sections of the Park for those who cared to accompany the ranger-naturalist. As another variation on the interpretive theme, the staff scheduled two talks a week at the Estes Park Chalet, the stopping place of nearly all bus passengers to the Park. New interpretive services included campfire programs at the Timber Creek Campground near Grand Lake, an increased schedule of activities at Glacier Basin and lodge talks at several new points in the Grand Lake vicinity. To serve visitors better, a ranger-naturalist was assigned to the Grand Lake area and full-time attendants were employed at both the Fall River Pass and Moraine Park museums.

The Junior Nature School, in a moribund state since 1942, was revived under the name "Bighorn Club," and in 1953 reached a postwar high in attendance. A "Chipmunk" division of the club was established for children ages seven to ten. Both a "Junior Museum" and workshop were established, giving the young people a place of their own and incidentally freeing Moraine Park Museum as a facility for other activities. [39]

The 1953-1954 travel seasons were filled with new interpretive activities and new discoveries about the impact of the interpretive program. For instance, it was found that the great majority of Park visitors never participated in any phase of naturalist work. During the calendar year 1953, 1,276,807 persons entered the Park, but of these, only 8,701—less than one per cent—participated in the 349 naturalist field trips. Interpretive talks attracted 36,659, or three per cent of the Park travel. The exhibit rooms were visited by 123,983

persons, or roughly fourteen percent of the total Park travel. [40]

Apparently the average Park visitor was not as hardy as his predecessors. In 1954, all-day hikes were just about abandoned, except for a "glacier trip" which was scheduled bi-weekly. Not even the "routine" daily hike from Bear Lake to Lake Haiyaha attracted the anticipated numbers. More popular with the visitors were the leisurely nature walks conducted at the public campgrounds, even though the environment traversed was not as susceptible to interpretation as other areas farther removed from points of visitor concentration. [41]

In 1955, for the first time, two ranger-naturalists carried out an interpretive schedule at the Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area west of the Park near Grand Lake. This area had been established by the Secretary of the Interior on June 27, 1952, and it became administered by the Park Service through an Inter-Bureau Agreement between the Service and the Bureaus of Reclamation and Land Management—all in the Department of the Interior. The original agreement was superseded by that of August 3, 1955, which added 8,000 acres to the land of the Recreation Area, bringing the total to 18,240 acres of land and water surface. It presently encompasses Lake Granby and Shadow Mountain Lake, which cover 8,380 acres and form part of the Colorado-Big Thompson Diversion Project. Early naturalist activities there consisted mainly of conducted boat trips on Shadow Mountain Lake. A park ranger administered the area and a clerk-typist was stationed in the headquarters lobby to act as an information-receptionist. [42]

Despite this information center and others like it in the Park, visitor orientation was still largely in the hands of private and public non-Service facilities. Information booths had long been established by both the Estes Park and Grand Lake Chambers of Commerce and they were supplemented by the efforts of the several hundred private enterprises in the Estes Park, Grand Lake, and Allenspark area. Yet the Park's obvious need for a modern visitor center would not be met for another ten years. Throughout the early 1950's even roadside interpretation remained limited at best. [43]

The rest of the interpretive program exhibited the sure and imaginative touch of Park Naturalist Ed Alberts. While the traditional morning naturalist hikes formed the backbone of the program, conducted field trips reached a new high in frequency and attendance. A number of longer, all-day hikes was offered, including one every two weeks to Tyndall and Andrews Glaciers. Still the major emphasis remained with shorter, more leisurely activities. More short nature walks were scheduled in 1955 than in any previous year.

At the same time, a positive effort was begun to de-emphasize off-site evening talks at privately owned establishments outside the Park's boundaries. Since some of these programs had become traditional, Park officials were careful not to inflame public opinion. By "playing down" the hotel programs, the administration freed naturalists to lead activities within the Park, where their foremost obligation lay. [44] This administrative move may have contributed to the very noticeable overcrowding at both Moraine Park Museum and Glacier Basin Campground. At both places, nightly programs were presented throughout the season.

During the 1956 travel year, visitor use of the Park and National Recreational Area reached a new high, with recorded travelers totalling 2,663,387. To help accommodate the crowds, a new information service was added during the summer season. The Park used two converted housetrailers as temporary movable information stations at Rainbow Curve on Trail Ridge Road and at the south end of Lake Granby near the Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area. The two trailers were manned by uniformed personnel, who were expected to answer visitors' questions and orient them in their tour of the Park. A new Hidden Valley Lodge was also tried experimentally as an information station, with a uniformed attendant. [45]

Though significant, these developments were overshadowed by an administrative crisis, over an experiment for integration of service that threatened to disrupt the entire naturalist program. The Superintendent's Monthly Report for July 1956 contained the following comment:

> The summer Interpretive program was in full swing throughout the month, with administrative responsibilities being handled by the Chief Ranger's office in accordance with the experimental integration of protection and interpretive seasonal personnel. Numerous conferences were held between the Park Naturalist and other members of Superintendent's staff concerning problems arising out of this experimental integration. [46]

Behind this terse paragraph lay the most dramatic and serious controversy to involve the Division of Interpretation before or since. On orders from the Washington office, this integration was to achieve a more efficient operation and eliminate friction between regular Park rangers and seasonal naturalists throughout the Park Service. Rocky Mountain National Park became the laboratory for this experiment. If the integration worked there, it might well succeed in other parks. Seemingly Rocky Mountain was made to order for such a move, for the Protection and Naturalist Departments enjoyed a friendly relationship. Furthermore, integration on a limited scale had been tried informally in 1947 when Chief Ranger Barton Herschler became Chief Naturalist pro tempore, after Raymond Gregg's transfer.

Although the experiment of 1956 was not successful, the reasons were known to lie in the breakdown in communications and confidence between the Park administration and the seasonal naturalists. In brief, there was friction between Superintendent James V. Lloyd and the ranger-naturalists. On one side stood an intractable superintendent who reportedly reassured his naturalists with the comment, "boys, this is only an experiment, but it will succeed." [47] On the other side was a group of seasonal naturalists who were defiant sometimes arrogant, but superb in their interpretive ability. This group included several men with doctoral degrees in the natural sciences. To Dr. Richard Beidleman, a seasonal naturalist, the integration seemed similar to an effort for integrating the police and school teachers in Estes Park. Another naturalist, Dr. Ferrel Atkins, argued that no true integration was proposed, for the ranger-naturalists were being absorbed in the ranger force.

District rangers were put in charge of the seasonal naturalists in each district, but they were not relieved of the former duties. The district rangers, more at ease apprehending speeders

than planning campfire sings, were made to feel uncomfortable by an increasingly restless group of seasonal naturalists. Had the popular Ed Alberts still been Park Naturalist much of the controversy might have been avoided. However, the recently appointed naturalist, Norman Herkenham, did not have Alberts' rapport with the ranger-naturalists.

Complicating the situation was Superintendent Lloyd's attempt to revamp the substance of the naturalist's programs. Because of the demands imposed by record-breaking crowds and the superintendent's predilections, the interpretive program was geared to shorter hikes and walks and routine information service. Though this shift in emphasis had been developing for several years, the seasonal-naturalists believed it was just another attempt to discredit "their" program. [48]

Lloyd also ordered Chief Naturalist Herkenham to perform audits of some of the interpretive services to evaluate the "content, accuracy, and effectiveness of the programmed events." [49] While this action was in accordance with Park Service policy, it seemed to anger further the seasonal-naturalists. They confided their problems to Park visitors and urged them to write to their congressman on their behalf. At this juncture, National Park officials such as Raymond Gregg and Chief Naturalist John Doerr visited the Park and held meetings—some subrosa—with the seasonal naturalists. [50] Despite these gatherings, misunderstandings were not corrected and hurt feelings were not salved. Neither was there ever a rapprochement between Superintendent Lloyd and his seasonal-naturalists. Some, including Beidleman, never returned to the Park. That winter the integration experiment was evaluated, found wanting, and quietly dropped.

The record breaking crowds that came to Rocky Mountain National Park and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area in 1957 forced the continued shift from longer hikes to self-guiding walks and information services. Yet the interpretive staff composed of a Chief Park Naturalist, Assistant Park Naturalist, and seventeen ranger-naturalists, was hard pressed to meet the demands of the visitors.

Public contacts at the entrance stations and along the roads were the most extensive media of information and interpretation. Information trailers were again used at Rainbow Curve and Lake Granby, as well as the Rock Cut area on Trail Ridge Road. Uniformed personnel stationed at these points dispensed information, gave short talks, and sold information publications to about 85,000 visitors. Information and orientation services also played a major role in the functioning of the Moraine Park Visitor Center, the Fall River Pass exhibit room, and the Hidden Valley Lodge. Ranger-naturalists were also stationed at points of heavy visitor concentration along Trail Ridge Road and near Bear Lake. Part of their time was devoted to "a roving-type" interpretive duty, to serve groups of visitors wherever and whenever they had questions. [51]

Self-guiding devices were used extensively at various points in the Park. On Trail Ridge Road alone, there were three self-guiding trails. The most extensively used device was "A Guide To Some Major Points of Interest On Trail Ridge Road." It consisted of a guide sheet keyed to numbered wooden shields. Other self-guiding trails were also established at Bear Lake, Moraine Park Visitor Center, and Gem Lake. Visitors could also make use of

numerous orientation signs along the roads and the 300 miles of trails in the Park and the National Recreation Area.

The informal campfire program schedule was considerably expanded in 1957. A session was held in one campground on each side of the Park every night of every week of the season. The accelerated program resulted in a 66 percent increase in attendance over 1956. The Park's program was designed to meet the needs of two types of visitors—the "camper or true outdoorsman" and the visitor "who prefers the indoor situation." [52]

A new youth hiking program was initiated in 1957 to replace the one which had served the Bighorn Club. Basically the new program provided interpretive services for all children, ages ten to fifteen. Two hikes, one of a half-day and one of a full day, were scheduled each week.

The annual Naturalist Report boasted:

> The program, as presented in 1957, is a result of careful research into the visitor use patterns of the area. There is a definite trend for increased attendance in most activities . . . . The area seems to have a reputation for a broad and varied hiking program and every effort is made to retain this. [53]

In 1958, although total Park travel decreased, there was an overall increase in attendance at interpretive activities, due partly to greater publicity for the programs and partly to the greater number of talks and off-site services. [54] For instance, illustrated programs were presented three nights a week at Grand Lake Lodge. By 1960 talks were begun two nights a week at the new Amphitheater at Stillwater Campground and off-site illustrated programs were presented at three other locations.

During the 1959 travel year, Park Naturalist Wayne Bryant, who had replaced Norman Herkenham the year before, questioned the wisdom of tieing down trained ranger-naturalists at information stations. He believed that interpretive signs would be adequate at Rainbow Curve, Rock Cut, and Lake Granby, thus freeing personnel for more useful personal contacts. [55] Evidently, an imperfect balance had been struck between serving as many visitors as possible and serving them in a meaningful way. Superintendent Lloyd stressed the former, while Bryant, backed by the seasonal-naturalists, supported the latter. What was needed was an effective merger of these two philosophies.

The basic problem of how best to utilize the ranger-naturalists persisted during the early 1960's. When available manpower permitted, ranger-naturalists on interpretive patrols augmented the information stations in providing person-to-person visitor orientation. Mobile ranger-naturalists stopped to make visitor contacts at Bear Lake and other points of high visitor interest where no manned station existed. However, in order to provide this instant information service, the number of scheduled conducted walks and hikes was reduced. [56] This reduction occurred despite the fact that the 1958 Naturalist's Annual Report urged: "Every effort should be made to retain the varied hiking program in this Park, for which it

has a good reputation." [57]

Due to its geographical position "on the way" to the Seattle World's Fair, Rocky Mountain National Park enjoyed a record-breaking visitation of 1,773,836 persons in 1962. Interpretive contacts totaled 4,453,925, up about 42 percent over 1961. This increase was due primarily to an additional 1,295,257 contacts at selfguiding devices. Increased attendance, however, was recorded in all categories. Some examples were: conducted trips, up more than 44 percent; talks, up nearly 16 percent; attended stations, up more than six percent; off-site service, up 17 percent. Guided interpretive trips were so well attended that the 22-man naturalist staff had trouble controlling the crowds. [58] During the following year, a record total of 1,855,373 persons visited the Park, and visits to the Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area increased from 693,292 in 1962 to 782,894. This was an increase over the record year of 1960, when visitors totalled 748,830. Campers in the Recreation Area increased by 37 percent. [59]

In response to record visitation in several national parks, ecological research projects were initiated regarding the impact of visitors on tundra and vegetation at Rocky Mountain, Grand Teton, Yosemite, Sequoia, and Mount Ranier national parks. From 1958 through 1965, the Park Service financed an Alpine Wilderness Ecology Research project at Rocky Mountain. Dr. John Marr of the Colorado University Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research directed the project while his associate, Dr. Beatrice Willard, led the field work. Their investigations aimed at an understanding of the ecology of alpine tundra and other plant communities and the prevention of further damage to the vegetation. In conjunction with this study, an annual summer seminar on alpine tundra ecology was started in June 1962 at Hidden Valley under the joint sponsorship of Colorado University, the Estes Park Chamber of Commerce, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, and the Park Service. [60]

In addition to the regular naturalist activities, special evening programs and conducted trips were provided on request. This policy taxed the naturalists' manpower to the limit. Still the Park felt an obligation to those visitors who "went in style." Superintendent Allyn Hanks explained the Park's predicament and philosophy:

> Considering the obligations for the presentation of interpretive services within the Park are of primary importance, and the regularly scheduled program is geared to the practical limit of available manpower, special programs when presented, must usually involve uncompensated overtime by interpretive personnel. This is an unfortunate situation, since over-night accommodations within the Park are virtually non-existent, except for campgrounds and travelers staying in the vicinity of the Park in lodges, motels, and hotels are bona fide Park visitors. [61]

Under the direction of Chief Naturalist, Merlin K. Potts, regularly scheduled naturalist activities were continued and expanded during the summer months of the 1964 season. With the naturalist staff at full strength, the program included 72 conducted trips and 54 evening campfire talks per week. In addition, six tours were conducted daily at the Granby Pumping Plant on Lake Granby. Many people, ages nine to 13, took advantage of the Park's youth

program. These activities conducted in July and August were devoted to a variety of nature studies and hikes. In 1964 the average daily attendance was 18 children at each of the 19 programs. [62]

The most popular activities conducted by the ranger-naturalists continued to be the evening campfire talks which were presented at ten sites in the Park and the Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area. A total attendance of more than 84,000 visitors was recorded at these talks. The Glacier Basin Amphitheater had an average nightly attendance of 390 visitors, leading all other sites by a substantial margin.

The plans for the interpretive program for 1965—the golden anniversary year—varied from the past in one important aspect. Midway through the travel year an Alpine Visitor Center at Fall River Pass on the Trail Ridge Road was opened. It was expected that more than 1,000 visitors a day would use the information services and peruse the alpine tundra exhibits which the building provided.

The naturalist service, begun almost 50 years before in Rocky Mountain National Park, had acquired a new and significant attraction for the interested tourist. But the most integral part of the naturalist service remained the naturalist himself, just as in the days of "Dixie" MacCracken, and even Enos Mills. From informal beginnings to an extensive and well trained staff, with varied facilities to carry out the expanding demands for instruction, the service had met its assignment. Handicaps, differences over policy, experimentation, innovations and dedication had all marked a part of the effort to fulfill a portion of the purposes for which the Park was created.

ENDNOTES

1. Merlin K. Potts, untitled speech for the Interpretive Division Training Program, Hidden Valley Lodge, June 23, 1964.

2. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1917, "Annual Reports, 1915-1930," pp. 8-9. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

3. Ibid., 1918, pp. 23-24.

4. Ibid., 1919, p. 28.

5. Ibid., 1920, pp. 1-4.

6. Ibid., 1921, p. 15.

7. Horace M. Albright, "National Parks Questions: Conference at Yosemite Valley has

many Gratifying Results," Parks and Recreation, November-December 1922, p. 87.

8. Dorr G. Yeager, "A Page of Comment," Nature Notes, July 1934, pp. 205-206.

9. Superintendent's Monthly Report, August 1923, "Monthly Reports, 1919-1923," p. 8. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

10. Estes Park Trail, May 18, 1923.

11. Rocky Mountain News, August 17, 1923.

12. Superintendent's Monthly Report, August 1924, "Monthly Reports, 1924-1926," p. 10. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

13. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1924, "Annual Reports, 1915-1930," p. 6. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

14. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1925, "Annual Reports, 1915-1930," p. 10. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

15. Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1925, "Monthly Reports, 1924-1926," p. 10. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

16. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1926, "Annual Reports, 1915-1930," p. 13. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

17. Yeager, "Page of Comment," pp. 205-206.

18. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1929, "Annual Reports, 1915-1930," p. 11, Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

19. Ibid., 1930, p. 2.

20. Estes Park Trail, April 7, 1930.

21. Ibid., March 21, 1930.

22. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1932, "Annual Reports, 1931 1953," p. 3. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

23. Estes Park Trail, November 25, 1932.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Dorr G. Yeager, "A New Museum," Nature Notes, April 1935, 22. Park Naturalist Dorr Yeager's outstanding success in developing the interpretive exhibits of this new museum led to his transfer to the Park Service's Western Museum Laboratory in Berkeley, California, in December of 1935.

27. H. Raymond Gregg, "Interpretive Development Outline for Rocky Mountain National Park," undated typewritten manuscript, p. 30. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

28. Superintendent's Monthly Report, June 1938, "Monthly Reports, 1938-1939," p. 7. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

29. Gregg, "Interpretive Development Outline," pp. 30-31.

30. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1940, "Annual Reports, 1931 1953," p. 15. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

31. In 1939 the Park was given administrative supervision over four national monuments, namely, Dinosaur, Fort Laramie, Scotts Bluff, and Devils Tower. By 1943, the Mount of the Holy Cross was added. Rocky Mountain National Park stopped administering Dinosaur, Fort Laramie, Scotts Bluff and Devils Tower national monuments in February 1955, Holy Cross was abolished as a national monument by 1951.

32. Gregg, "Interpretive Development Outline," p. 16.

33. Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1946, "Monthly Reports, 1946-1948," p. 3. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

34. Ibid., August 1946, p. 3.

35. Memorandum for the Superintendent from J. Barton Herschler, May 28, 1947. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

36. Superintendent's Monthly Report, June 1948, "Monthly Reports, 1946-1948," p. 3. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

37. Ibid., July 1948, p. 3.

38. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1949, "Annual Reports, 1931-1953," p. 10. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

39. Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1953, "Monthly Reports, 1953-1954," p. 5. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

40. Naturalist's Annual Report, 1954, p. 1. Rocky Mountain National Park Library. Beginning with 1952 travel was computed on a calendar year basis. Prior to that year, travel

was totaled from October 1 to September 30.

41. Superintendent's Monthly Report, August 1954, "Monthly Reports, 1953-1954," p. 6, Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

42. Estes Park Trail, March 1965.

43. Naturalist's Annual Report, 1955, p. 2. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

44. Ibid. For an in-depth study of the effectiveness of the naturalist program see Ferrel Atkins, "A Statistical Study of Ranger Naturalist Activities in the months of July and August of 1953 and 1954 in Rocky Mountain National Park," typewritten manuscript, Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

45. Naturalist's Annual Report, 1956, p. 1. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

46. Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1946, "Monthly Reports, 1946-1948," p. 6. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

47. Author's interview with Dr. Ferrel Atkins, July 15, 1967.

48. Ibid.

49. Naturalist's Annual Report, 1956, p. 1. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

50. Author's interview with Dr. Ferrel Atkins, July 15, 1967.

51. Naturalist's Annual Report, 1957, p. 2. Rocky Mountain National Park Library,

52. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

53. Ibid., p. 7.

54. Memorandum to the Director from Acting Superintendent John A. Rutter, undated. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

55. Naturalist's Annual Report, 1958, pp. 2-3. Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

56. Ibid., 1960, p. 3.

57. Ibid., 1958, p. 6.

58. Ibid., 1962, p. 3.

59. Ibid., p. 1.

60. Additional ecological studies were made in the Park during the late 1950's and early 1960's. Dr. Robert F, Griggs of the University of Pittsburg studied the tundra on Fall River Pass while Doctors Richard Ward and Frank Salisbury of Colorado State University conducted a study of alpine vegetation in the north end of the Park.

61. Superintendent's Monthly Report, June 1963, "Monthly Reports, 1963," p. 6, Rocky Mountain National Park Library.

62. Estes Park Trail, March 1965.
